

NC DCDEE Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Monthly Report
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Activity #:	10.3	Activity Name:	Early Educator Certification
Agency:	Child Care Services Association		

September 2015	October 2015	November 2015
Key Accomplishments:	Key Accomplishments:	Key Accomplishments:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">80 individuals were September in July through the RttT-ELC grant (53 initial, 27 renewal).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">121 individuals were October in July through the RttT-ELC grant (71 initial, 50 renewal).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
<ul style="list-style-type: none">12,142 total early educators hold an active certification. The number of individuals with a current certification will continue to fluctuate monthly as certificates are added and others expire.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">11,799 total early educators hold an active certification. The number of individuals with a current certification will continue to fluctuate monthly as certificates are added and others expire.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Renewal reminder emailed to individuals expiring in coming months.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Renewal reminder mailed to individuals expiring in coming months.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Shared CEU opportunities via email and facebook.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">CEU opportunities shared via facebook.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
<ul style="list-style-type: none">EEC information was shared at NCaeyc’s Table Talks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">	<ul style="list-style-type: none">

Challenges and Lessons Learned:	Challenges and Lessons Learned:	Challenges and Lessons Learned:
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NC DCDEE Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Monthly Report

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DCDEE ‘s use of expired EEC levels will likely have a negative impact on the renewal application rate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DCDEE ‘s use of expired EEC levels will likely have a negative impact on the renewal application rate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Administrator Endorsement is not currently in rule, limiting its impact. The number of individuals holding the Administrator Endorsement is inching upwards but would increase substantially if alignment between the two systems existed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Administrator Endorsement is not currently in rule, limiting its impact. The number of individuals holding the Administrator Endorsement is inching upwards but would increase substantially if alignment between the two systems existed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•

Upcoming Tasks:	Upcoming Tasks:	Upcoming Tasks:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leveraging Institute partnerships to build more EEC Rewards & Benefits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leveraging Institute partnerships to build more EEC Rewards & Benefits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recruiting new and renewal applicants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recruiting new and renewal applicants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sending reminders to early educators due to renew in upcoming months.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sending reminders to early educators due to renew in upcoming months.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Processing applications and issuing certifications to early educators who have applied.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Processing applications and issuing certifications to early educators who have applied.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seeking funding to support expansion of the EEC system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seeking funding to support expansion of the EEC system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supporting and working with partners to increase CEU opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supporting and working with partners to increase CEU opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Surveying those who choose not to renew to determine why and how to support them in renewing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Surveying those who choose not to renew to determine why and how to support them in renewing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Surveying those who elect to certify (initial and renewal) to determine why they applied and	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Surveying those who elect to certify (initial and renewal) to determine why they applied and	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•

NC DCDEE Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Monthly Report
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what is needed to support them remaining certified.	what is needed to support them remaining certified.	
• Responding to emails and telephone calls about EEC application and renewal.	• Responding to emails and telephone calls about EEC application and renewal.	•
• Supporting applicants for the RttT-ELC PD bonuses.	• Supporting applicants for the RttT-ELC PD bonuses.	•
• Assessing use of EEC benefits and developing outreach to inform and/or support use.	• Assessing use of EEC benefits and developing outreach to inform and/or support use.	•
• Building health and wellness benefits.	• Building health and wellness benefits.	•

Outcomes/Outputs Updates Not Addressed Above:	Outcomes/Outputs Updates Not Addressed Above:	Outcomes/Outputs Updates Not Addressed Above:
• 60% (1,192 early educators) of the minimum goal for this ten-month contract has been certified. (Goal was changed from 1,400 to 2,000 with contract extension.)	• 66% (1,313 early educators) of the minimum goal for this ten-month contract has been certified. (Goal was changed from 1,400 to 2,000 with contract extension.)	•

Successes

- **Total Number Certified:** From September 1, 2012 through October 31, 2015, Early Educator Certification (EEC) received funding from RttT-ELC to support a reduced application fee. Applicants were required to work with, on behalf of, or intend to work with children ages birth to five to qualify for the reduced fee. **Five thousand five-hundred and fifty (5,550) early educators were certified over this three-year period (3,345 initial and 2,205 renewal).** An additional 648 applied and qualified for RttT-ELC support, but either did not complete the initial application process or did not meet renewal requirements.

NC DCDEE Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Monthly Report

- **Outreach**

A variety of outreach strategies were implemented during this funded period. Many were repeated as needed to encourage application. Strategies included the following. EEC staff:

- Contacted all licensed child care programs via email or US Mail with information about EEC and the reduced fee.
- Worked with the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Scholarship® Project to share information in their regular mailings.
- Worked with the Child Care WAGE\$® Project to recruit participants who had not yet applied to EEC.
- Sent reminder emails and/or letters to individuals with expiring certifications.
- Posted information on Facebook and the NC Institute for Child Development Professional (Institute) website.
- Shared information at outreach tables and conferences.
- Published an article about EEC in the NCaeyc Milestones publication.
- Offered free one-hour webinars about the benefits of EEC.
- Sent a flyer to partners encouraging them to share the reduced fee with early educators.
- Made regular recruitment calls to licensed child care programs.
- Offered a variety of incentives to encourage individuals to apply for EEC.

- **Collaboration**

Collaboration through the grant period included but was not limited to:

- Meeting with the Division of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) to better align our systems.
- Participating in the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute efficiency study to illustrate the effectiveness and efficiency of our systems.
- Contacting businesses and vendors to increase rewards.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

- DCDEE's use of expired EEC levels will likely have a negative impact on the renewal application rate.
- Early educators are confused about the difference between a contact hour, a CEU and college credits, how they can be used and how to access them. To address this issue, sample CEU and training certificates were emailed to licensed programs and posted on the website. Despite this effort, confusion is still widespread.

NC DCDEE Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Monthly Report

- Directors and staff are often confused by the difference between EEC levels and DCDEE points. Calls are received regularly with questions about an individual's points. EEC staff will continue to redirect callers to their director and licensing consultant after the relationship between the two systems is explained.
- The cost of certification at the full rate is a barrier for most early educators.
- The Administrator Endorsement offers an additional form of role-specific recognition developed in partnership with DCDEE. The Endorsement is currently not in rule and thus has had a limited impact.
- More CEUs, that are both affordable and accessible, are needed to support certification renewal and the overall system. Individuals are willing to take CEUs rather than contact hours, but the cost and/or availability is often a barrier.

Recommendations

- The Institute will continue to work with DCDEE to find a solution regarding the use of expired certifications in a way that most benefits the workforce without compromising EEC.
- Ongoing communication needs to take place to assist programs in being able to differentiate between CEU's, college credits and contact hours. The Institute will work with partners to strategize best ways to address this issue.
- The Institute will analyze the cost of maintaining the program and will look for future funding support to keep the cost as low as possible for applicants.
- Including the administrator endorsement in rule could mean increased impact and supports for directors as well as simplified paperwork processing for the child care program.
- The availability of CEUs in NC has grown tremendously over the last few years, but will need to continue growing to meet the needs of certified early educators. The Institute will continue to work with partners to support the availability and affordability of high-quality CEUs across the state.

Deliverables:

- Five thousand five-hundred and fifty (5,550) early educators were supported by RttT-ELC to get certified over this three-year period (3,345 initial and 2,205 renewal). An additional 648 applied and qualified for RttT-ELC support, but either did not complete the initial application process or did not meet renewal requirements.
- Seven thousand five-hundred and eighty (7,580) total initial/renewal certificates were issued from 9/1/2012 through 10/31/2015. This includes individuals who applied prior to the contract begin date, but who were not evaluated/certified until 9/1/2012 or later. This also includes all applications received and includes directors, technical assistance staff, professional development staff, school age professionals, higher ed, etc.